

**Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge
Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania**

Acceptance Speech
October 14, 2008

Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master
Right Worshipful Senior Grand Warden
Right Worshipful Junior Grand Warden
Past Most Worshipful Grand Masters
Right Worshipful and Worshipful Grand Lodge Officers
Past Masters, Worshipful Masters, Senior Wardens, Junior Warden, and Brothers

I stand before you today humbly accepting the challenges of being elected to the position as the 99th Most Worshipful Grand Master of Prince Hall Masons for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

As we are taught in masonry that before engaging any important undertaking, that we must invoke the blessing of the Deity.

(Chaplain's: Prayer)

(Song: "God Is")

If you travel this road with God at your side, you would be redeemed and encouraged to move forward in the wake of the many obstacles and decisions that you may be comforted with.

One of the decisions that I've been toiling over is what am I going to bring to the table? I ponder and reflect to the Great Book of all Books in the 26th Chapter of Genesis it tells me of the story in the days of Abraham when there was a famine, His son Isaac wanted to travel to Egypt in search for new wells to dig during the famine that he was experiencing, when he was advised to remain and go back and open the wells that were previously dug that was replenished, which eliminated the drought. Behind me I'm blessed to have the wise sages of 13 Past Grand Master's, The Senior Past Grand Master Father Thomas S. Logan was the sitting Grand Master when I joined the craft in 1970. Since my first appointment by Grand Master Thomas Scipio in 1979, I had the pleasure of working for all of the Past Grand Masters with the exception of Father Logan, and on line with the last 3, which brings me to the depiction that Brother Thaddeus Hawkins alluded to about that Wes African ideogram from Ghana, which illustrates a bird with it's head and beak facing the rear yet it's body and feet are moving forward. Thus giving relevance to my reaching back to the Past Grand Masters and reopening those closed up wells and continue the work at hand. My theme **"Preserve the Past, Enrich the Future"**.

The many programs that have been on the trestle board from previous administrations will be considered for enhancement and forward projection that may assist in bringing certain items to fruition. The needed water is already in the covered wells, we need every one of us to fill up our vessels to satisfy the scarcity. Our basic operation is solely based on assessments from the craft, which is not meeting the needs of the operations. The economy of our nation has put a strain on everyone, membership is down our efforts to regain our former members wasn't completely successful, creative marketing may need to be explored to enlighten the community as to who and what we're about, expenses are steady increasing, and our financial structure is completely out dated. A business approach is being developed to bring the Grand Lodge into a corporate like operation, and our economic development department will aid in this structure, none of which will negate the guidelines of our Masonic Culture. Our two sights must become more self supporting; we currently have a \$1,000,000.00 dollar project to make some major upgrades at 4301 N. Broad Street however we must still obtain \$400,000.00 that will enable us to qualify for a \$500,000.00 rebate which is designated as a match. Which will provide us with the economic recovery that will bring some financial stability to that site; Plans also are being structured to engage with an entity that will add monthly income to the 1117 Wood Street building in Pittsburgh, PA.

All of us must take a part in bringing our goals to execution; therefore I'm seeking a fund raiser that will aid us towards bringing our headquarters to the marvel that it once was and should be. All donations received will go directly to the renovation project, donations of any amount, the donee will receive a Masonic coin in a nice encasement, those donating \$100.00 or more will receive this beautiful crystal with an etched Masonic/Logo embedded within. Our sisters have been contributing to the beautification of our Temple, and I'm sure that they will join in this fund raising effort as well. I'm convinced that once our goals are reached, and our knowledge has been increase as to how we can work with our Government and Corporate facilities we can move forward with assisting all of our lodges buildings with needed upgrades, but in the short fold we can possibly stave off any immediate increase in taxation, that will have a negative impact on all of our constitute lodges.

It is with your support, we can recover from this economic famine and come back to being that benevolent and community servant, that our fore fathers had designed this organization to be.

Fraternally submitted,

Charles A. Bishop

Charles A. Bishop, #112

Most Worshipful Grand Master